



**Note:** On January 27, 2021, the Substance and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), issued the following [update](#):

*“On January 14, 2021, HHS announced forthcoming Practice Guidelines for the Administration of Buprenorphine for Treating Opioid Use Disorder. Unfortunately, the announcement was made prematurely. Therefore, the Guidelines previously announced cannot be issued at this time. However, HHS and ONDCP are committed to working with interagency partners to examine ways to increase access to buprenorphine, reduce overdose rates and save lives.”*

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### **The Department of Health and Human Services Announces New Guidance Intended to Expand Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment for the Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder**

**Richmond, VA, January 15, 2021** – Indivior applauds the January 14, 2021 [announcement](#) from the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) of new guidance intended to expand access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD).<sup>1</sup>

HHS’ new [Practice Guidelines for the Administration of Buprenorphine for Treating Opioid Use Disorder](#) exempt physicians from certain certification requirements needed to prescribe buprenorphine for opioid use disorder treatment.<sup>2</sup>

In announcing these new guidelines, Admiral Brett Giroir, M.D., Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reinforced the role of MAT in helping people in recovery noting, “The medical evidence is clear: access to medication-assisted treatment, including buprenorphine that can be prescribed in office-based settings, is the gold standard for treating individuals suffering from opioid use disorder.”<sup>3</sup>

The patient need for greater access to providers and evidence-based treatment, including counseling, has never been more urgent. According to recent data released by the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), drug overdose deaths reached a record high in 2020 for the 12-month period ending

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health and Human Services. HHS Expands Access to Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder. January 14, 2021. <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/01/14/hhs-expands-access-to-treatment-for-opioid-use-disorder.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Health and Human Services. Announcement of Practice Guidelines for the Administration of Buprenorphine for Treating Opioid Use Disorder. January 12, 2021. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/mat-physician-practice-guidelines.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Health and Human Services. HHS Expands Access to Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder. January 14, 2021. <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/01/14/hhs-expands-access-to-treatment-for-opioid-use-disorder.html>

in June 2020. More than 83,000 drug overdose deaths were recorded, a 21% increase over the previous year.<sup>4</sup>

People are struggling in communities across the United States to access the treatment they need for their opioid use disorder. The social isolation and economic dislocation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic is also preventing people from accessing mental and emotional support groups, which are critical for those managing their recovery.<sup>5</sup>

Indivior is fully committed to working with all stakeholders to close the treatment gap that exists today. By coming together to remove barriers to treatment, end addiction stigma, and educate the public on the science of addiction, we can turn back this overdose crisis and help move those struggling with opioid use disorder toward a path to recovery.

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<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 12 Month-ending Provisional Number of Drug Overdose Deaths. January 3, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Volkow ND Collision of the COVID-19 and Addiction Epidemics. Ann Intern Med. 2020 Jul 7;173(1):61- 62. <https://doi.org/10.7326/M20-1212>.